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SUBJECT: OSCE WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS: SEPTEMBER 1 - 3, 2009

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Carol Fuller for Reasons 1.4(B)&(D)

Below are highlights from the Daily Digest of the U.S. Mission to the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe. These and other articles can also be found on Intelink at [http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe](http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Organization%20for%20Security%20and%20Cooperation%20in%20Europe)

Georgia: CiO Fears Disrupting Geneva Discussions

1. (SBU) At the weekly U.S.-CiO meeting September 1, Greek PermRep Marinaki reaffirmed the Chairmanship's intent to delay its decision on opening the proposed two-person Office of the Special Representative in Tbilisi until after the September 17 round of Geneva discussions. Marinaki said Athens had concluded the office might give the South Ossetians (and the Russians) an excuse to boycott the talks, and was reluctant to do anything to jeopardize the discussions. Turning to another threat, Marinaki mentioned Russia had linked the Geneva discussions to Georgia's draft UNGA resolution on IDPs, stating in an August 31 non-paper circulated in New York that the resolution, if adopted, would be Q&harmfulQ8 for the Geneva talks. ChargQ Fuller acknowledged the Greeks' concerns about the September 17 Geneva talks, but urged them to move forward afterwards with the Office, and to find creative ways to continue OSCE engagement in Georgia. On a related note, Marinaki reported that representatives of the Tagliavini Commission investigating the August 2008 war had interviewed four former OSCE military monitoring officers in Vienna August 18, but Q&had broken no new ground.Q8 Marinaki said the Chairmanship likely would invite Tagliavini to address the Permanent Council after the anticipated late-September release of the Commission's report.

Corfu: CiO Outlines Possible Ministerial Decision

2. (SBU) At the same meeting, Marinaki suggested this

fallQ,s Corfu meetings could lead to a detailed Ministerial Council decision providing for the continuation of the process during KazakhstanQ,s 2010 OSCE Chairmanship and beyond. The Greeks would like the decision to include a short list of future discussion topics and key logistical parameters to Q&lock inQ8 the process. On the subject of KazakhstanQ,s occasional mention of a possible Corfu-like informal ministerial next year, Marinaki said she had made clear such a meeting was not feasible, and had encouraged the Kazakhs to lower their expectations. She added, however, that Athens was vaguely considering preempting the KazakhsQ, proposal for an autumn meeting of the secretaries general of the Q&Big FiveQ8 regional security organizations (the OSCE, the CSTO, the CIS, the EU, and NATO) by organizing an informal meeting in Vienna or on the margins of the Athens Ministerial. According to Marinaki, the EU might be receptive to such an idea, but NATO Secretary General Rasmussen reportedly had encouraged a more cautious approach in a recent conversation with his OSCE counterpart. The ChargQ cautioned that any decision on the future of European security discussions should be driven by substance, and urged the Greeks to avoid any implication of an equivalency between NATO and the CSTO.

Russia to Send Reps from Moscow to Corfu Process Discussions

13. (C) Russian Ambassador Azimov told ChargQ dQ,affaires Carol Fuller during her initial courtesy call August 31 that Russia intended to bring officials from Moscow for at least

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half of the ten scheduled Q&Corfu ProcessQ8 discussions of European Security scheduled for this autumn. MFA European Security Director Voronkov would attend the meeting of September 15 that will include a joint FSC/PC review of the ASRC recommendations. DFM Grushko is slated to attend the November 24 Reinforced Permanent Council dedicated to preparation of an Athens Ministerial decision. Russia will seek, per Azimov, to put the focus more on arms control, confidence building measures, and CFE in the Corfu discussions, and will seek a separate FSC decision to this effect. Russia also has urged the CiO to invite CSTO, CIS, NATO, and EU delegations to the Corfu discussions. Separately, Greek/CiO Ambassador Marinaki told ChargQ September 1 that this proposal had been rejected. Azimov also said Russia would continue to argue for, but not insist on, the proposed high-level meeting of CSTO, CIS, NATO, EU, and OSCE. AzimovQ,s welcome to ChargQ Fuller was old-school charming and intentionally calculated to Q&disarmQ8 US concerns about a Russian hard lineQ*just as he had done in a courtesy call on former Ambassador Finley in August 2008 before becoming RussiaQ,s Q&attack dog.Q8 Privately, Marinaki advised ChargQ that Azimov did seem to have softened his tone a bit this week, but doubted this reflected any policy changes.

NATO Caucus on Corfu Process

14. (SBU) At the Sept. 2 NATO Caucus, Greek/CiO Ambassador Marinaki commented on the CiOQ,s goals and the process of the scheduled Corfu discussions. The Greeks are working toward an outcome at the Athens Ministerial that would include a decision providing a list of topics for future work and a structure for the future discussions. They will also seek a political declaration on European Security that sends a strategic message. Marinaki qualified these objectives by noting that the purpose is to Q&identify shortcomings and address if and when a dialogue will take place after Athens.Q8 The next three months of discussions will include at least the scheduled 10 meetings at Permrep level, with support from capitals as desired. She noted that Russia has indicated it would have support from capitals for most of the meetings. She said Russia accepted the list of topics, though it had lobbied for others (including, no doubt, a charter and OSCE Q&reformQ8) and was gearing up in the MFA to support the discussions. Marinaki said there will be no

participation from other international organizations or, with a few exceptions, from academic experts. The meeting on Sept. 15 was in three parts, and included a separate FSC/PC meeting that would feature Russian MFA European Security Director Voronkov presenting Russian views on follow-up to the ASRC conclusions. Lithuanian Ambassador Norkus cautioned that we needed to ensure that European Security would not proceed on two tracks, with the FSC discussions running parallel to the Corfu Process. Turkish Ambassador Buluc noted that review of CFE and Open Skies problems could only be done in the treaty-defined bodies (JCG for CFE) and were not the domain of the Corfu Process.

Corfu: EU Plans Q&Message of Common DirectionQ8

15. (SBU) Sweden/EU Ambassador Bard-BringQus outlined September 2 the EU approach to the Corfu meetings, saying the EU would seek to deliver a Q&message of common direction,Q8 while permitting national delegations to state individual view. This would be facilitated through a series of internal meetings: September 7 on First Dimension issues; September 14 on the Human Dimension; and September 22 on the Economic

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and Environmental Dimension. Bard-BringQus agreed that continued EU-U.S. coordination would be essential throughout the process. ChargQ noted that Greek/CiO Amb. Marinaki had told her Greece was considering holding an informal meeting of the secretaries general of the Q&Big FiveQ8 regional security organizations (the OSCE, the CSTO, the CIS, the EU, and NATO) either before Athens or on the margins of the ministerial; this caught Bard-BringQus by surprise. She said unilateral Greek approval of such a meeting Q&would pose difficulties for the EU familyQ8 given the EU decision-making process.

Georgia: EU Laments Russian Threats to Geneva Talks

16. (SBU) In ChargQ FullerQ,s first weekly meeting with the EU Troika September 2, Swedish PermRep Bard-BringQus said the Greek Chairmanship had reaffirmed its fears Russia would use GeorgiaQ,s draft UNGA resolution on IDPs to Q&kill the Geneva talks.Q8 Bard-BringQus noted Russia had asked Germany, Belgium, Greece, and Cyprus to vote against the resolution, and said CyprusQ, decision to abstain had Q&severely damagedQ8 hopes for a united EU statement. Turning to the ChairmanshipQ,s proposed Office of the Special Representative in Tbilisi, Bard-BringQus reaffirmed that Russian threats to cancel the Geneva discussions if an Office were established had led the Chairmanship to Q&suspendQ8 further efforts to do so. ChargQ Fuller reminded Bard-BringQus that the United States sees a need for an OSCE presence in Georgia and wants to see the topic raised again after the September 17 Geneva discussions.

Georgia: Russia Urges Less Rhetoric, More Pragmatism

17. (SBU) In his response in the September 3 Permanent Council meeting to EU and U.S. statements outlining well-known positions on Georgia, Russian PermRep Azimov declared that Russia was Q&getting tired ofQ8 hearing the same rhetoric Q&over and over,Q8 and urged a more Q&pragmaticQ8 approach to the Q&new situationQ8 in Georgia. Later, following a Georgian intervention detailing the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, Azimov shifted emphasis, focusing on GeorgiaQ,s domestic political situation and Q&appealingQ8 to Representative on Freedom of the Media Harazsti to Q&take the necessary stepsQ8 following Georgian authoritiesQ, September 2 denial of entry to two Russian journalists. Separately, the Greek CiO made clear that South Ossetian de facto authorities had denied access to Tskhinvali to Special Representative ChristopoulosQ, vehicle Q) not the special representative himself Q) on August 12, and added that alternative transportation arrangements had been made for the Geneva co-chairsQ, September 9-11 trip to Georgia.

Violence against Human Rights Defenders and Journalists in Russia

18. (SBU) The United States, Sweden (on behalf of the EU and associated states), Canada, and Norway expressed serious concern about the spate of violent attacks on human rights defenders and journalists in Russia and called on Russia to undertake immediate, full, and transparent investigations into these crimes in order to counteract the prevailing climate of impunity. Russian PermRep Azimov offered his condolences to the families of the victims and insisted that his government is taking the investigations seriously. He then deplored the fact that this issue was raised in the PC in what he termed a Q&confrontationalQ8 manner. He questioned whether this poisoning of the atmosphere, coming

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as it does on the eve of discussions on European security, was intentional, part of the Q&political gamesQ8 played by some participating States.

U.S. and EU Criticize Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on Media Freedom

19. (SBU) The United States and the EU expressed deep concern about the conviction of Kazakh journalist Ramazan Yesergepov on charges of disclosing state secrets, and called on in-coming Chair Kazakhstan to fulfill its OSCE commitments on media freedom. Kazakhstani PermRep Abdrakhmanov defended the conviction, asserting that Yesergepov had consciously violated Kazakh law and was held accountable in accordance with domestic legislation. According to Abdrakhmanov, the case has nothing to do with media freedom; Yesergepov is merely using his status as a journalist to attempt to escape punishment for his crimes. Similarly, the United States and the EU criticized the conviction and sentencing of Uzbek journalist Dilmurod Sayid for extortion and forgery. Both statements drew attention to what the EU called Q&a disturbing patternQ8 in using the criminal justice system to silence political opponents in Uzbekistan. In response, the Uzbek PermRep professed surprise at othersQ, Q&selective approachQ8 in singling out his country. He cited a new attitude by Q&certain countriesQ8 to use human rights issues as a pretext for interfering in UzbekistanQ,s internal domestic affairs. In a somewhat curious defense of the GOU, he said Sayid was convicted not as an individual, but as a member of a group.

HoM Ashgabat Cites Improvements in Turkmenistan

10. (SBU) In his address to the Permanent Council, Head of the OSCE Center in Ashgabat Ambassador Zekolli highlighted increasing contacts with the Government of Turkmenistan (GOTX), citing Q&first everQ8 projects in trafficking in persons; training for prosecutors, judges, and defense lawyers; penitentiary reform; and training for Turkmen and Afghan border and customs officials. Zekolli lamented as Q&significantly unchangedQ8 conditions facing the media and identified limits on student travel as a worrisome matter warranting further attention. Nonetheless, he said the prevailing view in Ashgabat is that the situation is Q&greatly improved.Q8 While the EU strongly rebuked Turkmenistan for its lack of progress on human rights issues, Russia urged that future reports Q&focus more on practical issues and less on the political situation in the host country.Q8 Turkmen PermRep Aydogdyev publicly (and privately) thanked the United States for recognizing positive developments. He glossed over the issue of student travel by pointing to bilateral agreements with other governments as an apparent solution. He also said so-called human rights prisoners incarcerated in Turkmenistan were, in reality, terrorists and criminals, and warned that the GOTX would not participate in the HDIM if three previously identified individuals representing Turkmen NGOs were admitted.

Russia Criticizes European Parliament Elections

¶11. (SBU) Russian PermRep Azimov criticized the June European Parliament (EP) elections and the perceived bias of ODIHR toward Western European countries. Azimov stated that the EP elections should not be a benchmark in how to conduct elections, Q&but rather the opposite.Q8 He pointed out that there is no single election control body and alleged that different national legal standards and norms within the EU

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create problems. He also noted that differences between the applicability of the Nice and Lisbon Agreements (the Lisbon Agreement not yet being in force) have created Q) and will continue to create Q) inequalities between EU member States. Azimov implied that ODIHR is biased in favor of Western European countries, and applies different standards for different elections. The Chair noted that ODIHR was not present to respond.

Response to ODIHRQ,s Preliminary Findings on the Kyrgyz Presidential Election

¶12. (SBU) Delegations from Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Belarus responded critically to the July 24 preliminary findings and conclusions of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission. The Kyrgyz PermRep urged that the Kyrgyz Central Election Committee (CEC) should work together with ODIHR in order to have a more Q&impartial and accurateQ8 assessment of the election proceedings. He alleged that the elections were conducted in accordance with the Copenhagen Agreement, and called for some of ODIHRQ,s findings to be revised. He claimed Q&technical problemsQ8 with some election monitors, and said Q&professionalQ8 monitors should be utilized in order to respect the sovereignty and laws of the host State. As part of RussiaQ,s continued assault against ODIHR election observation, Ambassador Azimov said there should be new rules for election observation missions. Belarus added that ODIHR election monitoring during the Kyrgyz presidential election was Q&very transparent,Q8 but alleged that standards differ for election observation missions, depending on where they are.
FULLER